Introduction

An assemblage of 153 sherds of samian ware recovered from work on the site of Ladybellegate Street in Gloucester was submitted for this report. The samian assemblage from Upper Quay Street could not unfortunately be located for this analysis.

Methodology

The fabric of each sherd was examined, after taking a small fresh break, under a x 20 binocular microscope and the whole assemblage fully quantified. The resulting data was entered onto a MS Excel spreadsheet where each archive entry consists of a context number, fabric, form and decoration identification, condition, sherd count, MNV (Maximum Number of Vessels), rim EVE (Estimated Vessel Equivalents), rim diameter, weight, notes and a date range.

The decorated samian and the stamps were the subject of further analysis and detailed catalogues are provided in full at the end of this report. Rubbings of the decorated fragments and stamps were taken, mounted, scanned and submitted as illustrations.

Condition and taphonomy

The samian group is largely made up of very small fragments and this is reflected in the average weight (c.6.5g) which is low. No cross-contexts or cross-periods joins were recorded.

Out of the 153 sherds, 108 come from contexts attributed to Roman periods 1 to 6, 32 were recovered from contexts assigned to the post-Roman period, 12 are unstratified and one is currently unassigned (context 279).

Assemblage composition and chronology

The excavation produced 153 sherds of samian ware, weighing 789g, for a rim EVE figure of 2.68 (table 1). Overall the samian assemblage contains a range of vessels dating from the pre-Flavian period to the 3rd c. AD though the bulk of the samian dates to the 1st c. AD with 79% of the total sherds count coming from South Gaul.
Period overview

**Period 1**

The samian assemblage recovered from period 1 is small with only six sherds recovered from the fill of pit 552, all from La Graufesenque in South Gaul. The fragments are particularly small and abraded (average weight of 3.6g). The range of forms is very limited with four dishes form Dr.18 and two cups forms, Dr.27 and Ritt 9. It is difficult to date the Dr.18s and the Dr.27 more accurately than 1st c. AD; the fragments are small and relatively un-diagnostic. The Ritt. 9 is the only form that provides clear evidence that the group is probably pre-Flavian in date.

**Period 2**

The samian assemblage recovered from contexts assigned to period 2 is a little larger with 43 sherds and includes mostly South Gaulish vessels from La Graufesenque (table 1). The range of forms is limited and again dominated by plain forms (Dr.15/17, Dr.18, Dr.27 and one Ritt.9).

The majority of the samian recovered from that period comes from make-up layers (545) and (547). One of the two stamps present in those layers is unfortunately too partial to be identified (Cat. no.7), the other is probably by potter Primus iii (Cat.no.8) whose date range is relatively long (AD40-80). The only sherd of decorated ware in layer (545) is small but possibly from a Dr.37, a form normally dating to the Flavian period.

One fragment of pre-import Lezoux ware with its characteristic micaceous fabric and pale slip was recovered in make layer (547). In the absence of a stamp, this piece is difficult to date precisely, the form, a Dr.18 is not particularly early and is likely to be early Flavian. The presence of pre-import Lezoux material is interesting but not unusual for a site with military occupation (Willis 2005, 6.4).

The samian from beam slot 525 consists of a bodysherd fragment from a dish form Dr.15.17 more typical of the pre-Flavian and early Flavian period along with a stamp by La Graufesenque potter.
Iullinus dated AD65-110 though the die recorded here is one of his latest (see Cat. no.6; Hartley, Dickinson 2009, 363).

A literate but partial graffito is present on the single samian vessel recovered from street surface (526)

**Period 2?**

The samian group from occupation layers 471 and 472 consists of only six sherds all South Gaulish in origin. The forms include five cups (Dr.27, Ritt.9) and a dish (Dr.18) all consistent with a pre to early Flavian date.

**Period 3**

With only seven sherds, very little samian material was recovered in three contexts assigned to period 3 (make layers 489 and 516; ditch fill 519). The group is again entirely South Gaulish in origin and made up of relatively un-diagnostic plain forms.

**Period 4**

South Gaulish samian from La Graufesenque still dominates with 20 out of 24 sherds but types more typical of the Flavian period are now represented: a beaker form Dé67 in fill (507) of robber trench 509, a flanged bowl form Cu.11 in fill (514) of robbed foundation trench 21 and a decorated bowl form Dr.37 in occupation layer (523) (see Cat. no.4). This is also the first period where 2nd c. AD samian material makes an appearance albeit in small quantities with a Trajanic flake in fill (437), an Hadrianic cup in fill (522), a dish and a decorated bowl in fill (514) and an East Gaulish fragment probably later Antonine in date in fill (20) of robbed out trench 521.

**Period 5**

Only three samian fragments come from this period, an East Gaulish dish form Dr.31 in street surface (377) probably from Trier and dating to the later 2nd c. AD to mid-3rd c. AD; a Trajanic cup form Dr.27 from Les Martres-de-Veyre in Central Gaul (make-up layer 483) and a decorated bowl from La Graufesenque in make-up layer (486). The latter weights 2g and is too small to assign to a potter.

**Period 6**

With 14 sherds out of 18, most of the samian from period 6 comes from demolition layer (506) and consists of re-deposited South Gaulish material dating to the Flavian period with a single fragment of Trajanic samian from Les Martres-de-Veyre.

Demolition layers (435) and (441) each yielded a single fragment of Central Gaulish samian from Lezoux dating to the 2nd c. AD. Finally two rims come from demolition layer (370), a 1st. C. AD South Gaulish cup form Dr.27 and a 2nd c. AD bowl from Lezoux in Central Gaul.

**Post Roman and unstratitided**
The samian material is unsurprisingly very mixed with samian forms and fabrics ranging from the pre-Flavian to the later 2nd-early 3rd c. AD. Re-deposited 1st c. AD samian fragments dominate the assemblage but few Central and East Gaulish vessels are present (table 1).

The latest diagnostic piece is a beaker form De.72 with cut-glass decoration recovered in (23). Originating from Rheinzabern in Eastern Gaul, this vessel most probably dates to the first half of the 3rd c. AD (Bird 1993).

**Concluding remarks**

The samian group from Ladybellegate Street is small and the diagnostic pieces present within it are relatively few and fragmentary. It is dominated by 1st c. AD South Gaulish material from La Graufesenque. The group is too small to undertake much in terms of statistical or functional analysis but some remarks are possible, particularly regarding the 1st c. AD assemblage. The more diagnostic pre-Flavian types (Ritt 8 and 12, Dr.24/25) represented in the assemblage from Kingsholm (Wild 1985) and in the more recent one from Barnwood Road (Monteil forthcoming) are largely absent in this group. The only Dr.24/25 was recovered residual in period 7.

The functional profile is not particularly “military” in nature, the relative frequency of samian forms from military sites in Britain is generally dominated by dish and platter forms with decorated bowls in second place and cups in third position (Willis 2005, chart 13). Here decorated vessels are poorly represented within the South Gaulish group (barely 10%) and this contrasts with published profiles for military sites especially early ones (Willis 2005, table 35).

The presence of a pre-import Lezoux platter is nevertheless consistent with a military occupation in the pre and early Flavian period (Willis 2005, 6.4).

The very modest quantities of second-century material both from Central and Eastern Gaul are unexpected and suggest minimal activity or deposition on this site after AD120.

**Decorated samian catalogue**

The following catalogue lists the decorated pieces recovered from the site. The material is very fragmentary and small which renders precise identification difficult. The catalogue is organized in period then context order, each entry gives a catalogue number, the excavation context number with details of the decoration.

The figured-types referred to as Os. *** are the ones illustrated by Felix Oswald in his Index of figure-types on terra sigillata (1936).

The Inventory Numbers (Inv. No.) quoted are taken from European intake of Roman Samian ceramics. [http://www.rgzm.de/samian/home/frames.htm](http://www.rgzm.de/samian/home/frames.htm)

**Period 2**
Cat. no.1 — (545), one body sherd, Dr.37?, La Graufesenque. Too little of the decoration remains for this piece to be identified. AD70-110

Cat. no.2 — (547), one body sherd, Dr.29, La Graufesenque. Too little of the decoration remains for this piece to be identified. AD 40-85

Period 4

Cat. no.3 — (507), one body sherd, Dé.67, La Graufesenque. Very little decoration remains, the delicate little hare inside the beaded medallion cannot be exactly paralleled on a stamped vessel but it is close to the one found on vessels with internal stamps by Modestus i (Inv. No. 0005187), a pre-Flavian potter. This perhaps suggests that this beaker is an early example of the form. Early Flavian?

Cat. no.4 — (523), one body sherd, Dr.37, La Graufesenque, partial figured type, probably a Bestarius as used by La Graufesenque potter Mercator i (Inv. No. 0005142), AD70-110

Period 7

Cat. no.5 — (25), one body sherd, Dr.37, Lezoux. Lower part of Os.339 between two beaded borders, the figured type was used by Acaunissa (Inv. No.0010003) but also Advocisus (Inv. No.0010018). The borders suggest that perhaps this is the work of the latter. Antonine?

Catalogue of samian potters’ stamps

The following catalogue lists the potters identified in context order. Each entry gives the catalogue number, the excavation context number; potter’s name (i, ii etc, where homonyms are involved); die form; form type, pottery of origin, a reference to published drawing (where available) and date.

Cat. no.6 — (525), Iullinus i, 7a, dish, La Graufesenque, Hartley, Dickinson 2009, 363, the potter is dated AD65-110 but the die recorded here is one of his latest so a date range AD 80-110 is likely (ibid).

Cat. no.7 — (545), unidentified, dish, La Graufesenque, only two partial letters remain

Cat. no.8 — (547), Primus iii, Dr.27g, La Graufesenque. The stamp is too abraded at either end to be certain of a full reading but, on an enlarged version of the rubbing, three letters are visible in the middle: [PRI [. This is likely to be a stamp by potter Primus iii (Hartley, Dickinson 2011,222-3). AD40-80

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